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## CITY COUNCIL COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE (COW) New Item for Review and Consideration

Meeting Date: 01/05/2017  
Agenda Item: 4B4

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**Issue Description:** To further Council's commitment to expand the accessibility and inclusiveness of parks and playground experiences for children with all-abilities through the strategy of adaptive park improvements.

**Presented by:** Vice Mayor Arredondo-Savage and Councilmember Schapira

**What are you looking to accomplish?** To provide all Tempe children with a universally accessible park experience that promotes inclusiveness for all-abilities in a fun and safe environment.

**Background Information:** Inclusive playground concepts are a growing national trend as cities expand their commitments to children with disabilities well beyond the ADA legal requirements. The City of Mesa recently made a significant financial investment to add several inclusive play elements to Dobson Ranch Park. While all parks and playgrounds must be ADA compliant, the rules for inclusiveness are less defined. What used to be an emphasis on accessibility has transitioned to include considerations for sensory processing, developmental delays and many other physical and mental disabilities. Some examples of inclusive playground equipment include the "cozy cocoon", which provides a space for children with autism to escape when overstimulated. Another is "Sway Fun Glider" that is wheelchair accessible, providing vestibular input for all ages and levels of mobility.

The City has just completed phase 1 of the ADA Citywide Assessment. A number of deficiencies have been identified in the parks that were surveyed; in addition to these deficiencies, the parks often fall short of Tempe's commitment to exceed the minimum federal standards and provide inclusive opportunities. As staff continues to implement the Parks Reinvestment program approved by Council there is an opportunity to expand and enhance the park experience so they are universally accessible, and providing opportunities for children with and without disabilities a more inclusive, fun, and safe playing experience. To achieve this would further Council's commitment to park accessibility and adaptability outlined in the City of Tempe 2001 Parks & Recreation Master Plan. This working group would also work with staff to identify sections of the plan that may need updating.

Industry definitions:

Accessible – embraces inclusion and participation beyond ADA

ADA compliant – meets the minimum requirements

Adaptive – recreation programs or play features designed specifically for people with special needs

Universally accessible – equipment/playgrounds designed for all kids, including those with special needs, without separation

This proposed program is aligned with Council Priorities 3 and 4.

*The Tempe City Council is committed to:*

1. *Ensuring a safe and secure community through a commitment to public safety and justice.*
2. *Developing and maintaining a strong community connection by emphasizing the importance of open government, customer service and communication with community members.*
3. *Enhancing the quality of life for all Tempe residents and workers through investment in neighborhoods, parks, the arts, human services, and city amenities, with an emphasis on equity and diversity.*
4. *Implementing sustainable growth and development strategies, including improving Tempe's public transit system to meet future needs, by actively seeking innovative technologies and leading the way in creating a more sustainable community.*
5. *Maintaining long term financial stability and vitality by focusing on economic development, business retention and generating employment to create a robust and diverse economic base.*

**What stakeholders should be engaged with this process?** Public Works, Community Services, Diversity Office, and Parks, Recreation, Gold, and Double Butte Cemetery Advisory Board.

**Anticipated Timeframe and Staff Resources:** 16-20 hours

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